

# THE MODESTY LINE IN SKIRTS BY EDGAR SALTUS



The history of clothing is the history of love. Whose invention the one invented the other.

That was a long time ago. The idealization of woman came later. To effect that idealization the world had to create fresh theories and customs. Christianity brought the first. Time produced the other.

With Christianity came new conceptions of beauty. With time new conceptions of dress. It was centuries before both were adopted. When they were adopted, they were modesty.

Then at once when the poor had been the night appeared. In place of the female came the lady. And woman, who hitherto had served, began to reign.

It took ages to accomplish that. What cycles have achieved shall the bicycle destroy?

Such is the question of the day. The future will decide. Meanwhile here are facts.

Bicycling was common abroad before it became fashionable here. But, though common, it did not become fashionable until it was taken up by the young princes and princesses of Denmark and those royal and imperial cousins of theirs who visit them every summer.

Immediately thereafter, in no time at all, the demand exceeded the supply. Paris and London were basking mad. For all the writer knows to the contrary, Berlin and Vienna, too. It is true there is asphalt there, and there are roads which the Romans built and which are still roads and real roads to-day. Such things facilitate biking. But asphalt or no asphalt, good roads or bad, biking there would have been if only because of royal precedent. Snobishness is unconfined.

But the point is elsewhere. What great ladies do little ladies imitate. On the left bank of the Seine students congregate. They study law, medicine and a number of arts, some of which the Journal refuses to catalogue. But the studies are spaced with leisure so wide that there is time and to spare for that which is technically known as the studentess—the young woman who has replaced the grisette, and who is charming or the reverse, according to the point in view. When biking became fashionable she adopted it as a matter of course, bloomers also.

France is conservative. There were a number of old women of both sexes whom those bloomers shocked, and complaints addressed to the authorities were communicated to the press.

The reply was brief. Bloomers had the seal of municipal approval. Since their adoption by studentesses, students had begun to study. The authorities declined to interfere.

The absence of interference was one thing. The defection of the students was another. The young women recognized that their chaperons had exhorted, and promptly went back to skirts, rather abbreviated perhaps and unnecessarily bouffant, but still skirts that rustled pleasantly through the leasures of those students once more.

The writer may be in error, he frequently is, but if only because of that little incident it seems to him that the movement agitated by the Rev. Dr. Conwell is needless.

This gentleman, the pastor of the Grace Baptist Church of Philadelphia, spoke recently before the Women's Congress to the following effect:

"The bicycle is one of the most important instruments for the advancement of woman. In physical strength, in mental ability and in social equality that has come into our civilization. The exercise for the body, the outdoor experience and the liberty of action which it brings have already proved a blessing. Its importance makes it of great consequence that it should be preserved to woman and that she should be kept from abandoning it before it has become a permanent institution. The great danger now is that women of bad taste or character will avail themselves of its publicity to do immodest things or to wear immodest dresses. Even now on our boulevards women are seen who exhibit themselves in attire which shocks the sense of modesty.

"Such exhibitions and disregard of true womanliness will certainly keep away many who now use the wheel and prevent thousands from learning.

"The movement which is now needed to check this tendency is to set some standard of dress and by the force of public opinion support the police in arresting those who abuse the bicycle and its opportunities.

"There should be a convention of the women representing bicyclists and bicycle clubs, strong and decided resolutions passed against immodesty, and a general standard of dress adopted."

No doubt there are immodest women. They are encounterable not only on bikes, but on foot. But their presence on thoroughfares has never housed decent women yet. Their influence is too insignificant. Influence to be preponderant must be attractive. Immodesty is never that. "In the case of a plain woman it is repellent."

## A CORBETT CATFISH.

A Man-Smashing Finny Fighter That Has Laid Out Three Human Victims.

Swimming lazily about in a tank with extra heavy glass sides in the State hatchery of Nebraska, at Omaha, is a member of the finny tribe that has suddenly leaped into piscatorial fame as a "man-smashing" catfish.

It is beyond question that this is the only catfish ever caught in inland waters which has a record of knocking out three men on terra firma, and which has lived to be feared and at the same time admired by his human victims.

This "man-smashing" fish has justly earned the strange name by actually vanquishing in three ribs of one man and painfully bruising two others, one no less a person than the State Commissioner of Nebraska, Mr. Lew May. Were he not the property of the State he would doubtless be widely sought by museum agents and exhibited from one end of the country to the other. As it is, several of these enterprising gentlemen have unsuccessfully endeavored to secure his lordship.

There have been plenty of instances of a fish knocking a man out when both were in the water, but for even a big fish to accomplish that feat on land is certainly a novelty.

The catfish weighs 110 pounds. A catfish that weighs a good deal less than that is an ugly customer to handle, for he has vim and bounce enough for a dozen of some varieties of his brethren. They are all weaklings when compared with this 110-pounder, as the story of his achievements shows.

He was one of the big attractions at the recent State Fair at Omaha, for ever since a piny fisherman netted him out of the Missouri River at Plattsmouth he has been growing larger and even handsomer, as fish go.

He showed such a record as a fighter that his captor, instead of keeping him and serving him up to hungry customers, put him in a tank and awaited developments. They came soon enough. From being a big fish he was rapidly becoming an enormous one, and each day increased the troubles of his unfortunate captor. He was getting too big and valuable as a curiosity to kill, and at the same time his destructive habits threatened to force his owner into bankruptcy. Almost every day he managed to break the light, wooden tank in which he was at first kept, into a greater or less amount of kindling wood.

When the fair ended it was decided to transfer the big fellow to the hatcheries. This was the beginning of trouble. The big-jawed levitation rather liked to be on exhibition. He seemed to look at the people just as much as they looked at him.

So when it came to retirement he objected. How he did object. Even the venerable Holman in the days of his dictatorship couldn't hold a candle to him.

His catchup's home at the fair had been a narrow tank, so that he would not have much of a chance to swing his tail with sufficient power to do any damage. His reputation for amiability was not above par, and when it came to moving him, precaution was taken to prevent him hurting any one.

This precaution consisted in wrapping a folded cloth around the fish's head before any efforts were made to lift him out of his abiding place. The cloth was made fast, it was supposed, and then the word was given to those assembled to perform the task to heave away.

They heaved right royally, and so did the fish. At last he had room according to his tail. Over went men and fish on the floor, and the number of revolutions the terrible tail made in a moment would put any respectable flywheel to shame. All hands rolled around the floor, the fish landing every time he struck. It was the prettiest fight Omaha ever witnessed. The beauty of it was, too, the police couldn't stop it, not even the fish's tail. If Sharkey should ever hit Corbett with anything like the force with which that fish struck his antagonists, there would be a new champion right away.

There were really three men in this boat, and a pretty bad boat it was to be in. The more the fish struggled, the stronger and wilder he seemed to get. Presently his tail went sideways with a swish. A second later John Meredith, of the State Fish Hatcheries, found himself up against the side of the building with three ribs broken. Superintendent O'Brien, of the Hatcheries, went head over heels from a blow of that powerful tail on one of his eyes. State Fish Commissioner W. L. May never knew what hit him, because it came so quick and hard, but it drove him some distance along the floor and caused him to feel as if he had experienced a sudden and violent attack of muscular rheumatism.

Then the great, big, conquering fish began to tire. The absence from his wounded element told on him. The fierce strokes of the tail came less and less often, until at last they ceased altogether. The monster lay limp and apparently lifeless upon the floor.

This was the coveted opportunity. One man went forward, and to show his courage patted the fish. Then he turned in triumph, and then—well, then there was a sudden s-w-i-s-h and the man of courage went into space as if he had been inspired by a full-grown catapult. It was the tail again—the tail of the biggest fish Omaha ever saw.

There is an end to all things, and so, after a while, the fish capitulated, was wrapped in a blanket and carried in triumph to the hatcheries. When they dumped him into a tank there he deliberately sank to the bottom and refused to move. Whether it was sulks or exhaustion no one knows, but to see just how he appears, glance at the accompanying illustration.

The fish—strangely enough he has no name of his own—has always been considered rather dangerous ever since he began to approach his present size. For days at a time he will sulk, for all the world just like a child, and then in a moment seem to reach a fury of passion and do his best to disturb his surroundings.



## SLEEPS ONCE IN TWO WEEKS

A Man Whose Life Is Almost a Perpetual State of Torment.

To sleep but once in fourteen days and then only under the influence of opiates, seems a cruel enough condition. It is only part of the torture which M. B. Cowdick, of Bradford, Clearfield County, Pa., has suffered for the last eleven years.

Mr. Cowdick's life during that time has been one of such unending agony that nothing but the state of the damned could be worse. Human ingenuity never devised such cruelty. He would be in good luck if he could change places with a victim of Turkish or Chinese legal torture. His pain, which is unending, is just as great as it can be without depriving him of life and putting him out of his misery. It is thus the most appalling form of suffering which the human mind can conceive.

Eleven years ago Mr. Cowdick was attacked by pains which he thought to be rheumatic. They soon caused him acute suffering, and he consulted a local physician. This man's treatment was tried for

some months, and had no good results. A second physician was consulted, and again without effect.

Mr. Cowdick then went to Philadelphia, where he consulted a well-known specialist in the treatment of rheumatic disease. The exact nature of his complaint was a mystery to this practitioner. He experimented with various remedies without success.

The invalid yielded in succession three other well-known Philadelphia physicians. Not one of them was able to relieve him. One of them recommended pine baths, and these he also tried without success. During this time the disease had been steadily growing worse, until Cowdick was in the condition he still finds himself. The pains were incessant, and he had to spend his time sitting helpless in an easy chair, squeaking his racked limbs. Natural sleep became impossible, and only opiates brought this great relief.

After physicians he tried patent medicines, and in these alone he spent over two thousand dollars. Before his illness he was a well-to-do man, now he is on the verge of poverty.

Eleven years ago his condition necessitated a heavy use of opiates. The initial dose soon became powerless, and had to be increased rapidly. Now the quantity that will give him relief is so great that it means a further weakening of his shattered health. It is not possible, without endangering his life to put him to sleep more than once in two weeks.

Night and day he sits in his invalid chair, shuddering with pain, wringing his hands in hopeless supplication, waiting for the relief that never comes. His once strong frame is reduced to a writhing skeleton, but still it resists the attacks of the enemy that never relents. Sleep is possible so seldom that it is no more than one drop of dew to the tongue of a man dying of thirst. Medical science can do nothing for him, and as long as his strength holds out he must live a life that is worse than death.

## MENAGERIE ON BIKES.

Cats, Dogs, Monkeys and Even Parrots Now Go Riding with Their Masters.

The bicycle animal is rapidly becoming as popular an institution as the wheel itself. The particular sort which delights in the wheel seems to be the cat. Perhaps it is because the dog is the foe of the cyclist. However that may be, there are any number of cats who accompany their owners when they go for a spin on their wheels. The picture that accompanies this is drawn from a snap shot photograph and is true to life.

Naturally enough, it is the younger of the bicycle riders who have brought this newest feature of cycling into prominence. They have begun with cats, but there is no reason why the experiment should end there. There is nothing to prevent the maiden lady, when she goes a-wheel, from letting her parrot perch on the handlebars, while the cat purrs comfortably on her shoulder. Then, if her pet dog is little enough, she can attach a basket to the handle bars and let the pampered canine lie therein while she pedals along. So far as known, the pioneer bicycle

as red wine in a green glass. It puts your teeth on edge. In the case of a pretty woman it is irreconcilable as ferocity in a lamb. It is the very last thing you expect.

The ideas which Dr. Conwell has expressed are excellent as a whole. Examined separately, they savor, as is but natural, of the provincial divine. Public opinion is not needed to support the arrest of those whose immodesty offends. There are laws on the subject, and those laws are enforced. But that which this gentleman considers immodest, policemen of the world may not. There is no line except the clothes line.

In Paris that line is a trifle higher. In London it is a trifle lower than is observable here. A standard that shall be general may seem feasible, but it will never come from any convention of women representing local bicyclists and bicycle clubs. It will come, if it ever does, as the fat sleeves came, as the thin sleeves are coming, from the edicts of certain artists who reside in the neighborhood of the Rue de la Paix.

The majority of women would rather be dead than out of the fashion. Becoming or unbecoming, the prevalent mode is the mode to which they cling. In ages remote there were fashions in leaves, which changed as fashions in frills change to-day. "A modishly attired woman," said Sidney Smith, "possesses a peace of mind which religion cannot bring."

Women are all alike in this—they are every one of them different. But where they agree, the point on which there is solidarity among them, is reverence for Fashion, for its mandates and decrees. Fashion is a despot; though it has no dungeons, it can banish. It is a matter of conventionality, no doubt, but conventionality is a force of such power that it has exiled emperors and swept queens away.

Its ministers are social leaders. Any one who has noticed the process by which the cut of a garment, an arrangement of the hair, is introduced or tabooed by them, will appreciate the power which they possess. They are more than rulers, they are legislators. A convention of women, however representative of bicyclists, that should presume to dictate what they shall wear would waste time that might be better employed. It is for them to dictate to conventions of women, not for conventions of women to dictate to them.

And they will. The bike has come to stay. It has their indorsements. They don't wear bloomers on it. They don't wear abbreviated skirts. Their dress falls around and about the ankle. There let us hope it will remain, for in that case it will be adopted north, east, south and west.

If it don't remain where it is, if through a vagary of the understanding it should creep higher, pass out of sight and develop, as was recently threatened, into breeches, we may say goodbye to a good many things, and first and foremost to feminine allurements.

If breeches come on the bike, they will come on the street. The skirt will disappear. Love as well. It will be the dawn of platonic affection.

That possibility is remote. Woman is too clever to divest herself of that which makes her attractive. A man lives as long as he has the faculty to desire, and a woman lives as long as she is desirable. Her desirability is in exact proportion to her womanliness. And of womanliness the skirt is the insignia.

In prehistoric ages, when tattooing was a garment, it has been authoritatively surmised that woman's attractiveness was so meagre that she was as incapable of detaining man as animals are incapable of detaining each other. There were herds, not homes. The development of the wardrobe was the development of the affections. The heart of man began to beat when woman ceased to resemble him. But it was not until religion had made her modest and fashion mysterious that his enthrallment was complete.

It is for that reason that love dramas, which, apart from mythology, were so infrequent in the past, are so numerous in modern history. In earlier days woman was slave. It was the mystery with which the skirt enveloped her that made her queen.

The charm of that mystery is one which no other can or will supersede. Ages have been spent in twisting and turning and draping and perfecting it. It has become not alone the insignia of femininity, but the outward characteristic which distinguishes woman from man.

In breeches that characteristic disappears; modesty, too. Breeches are an improvement on tattooing in that they are a better protection from the elements. But with them the visible charm of woman, the curves and lines and folds which tell a man that he is in the presence of a being different from himself, a creature desirable and mysterious, is gone.

In her place there is a person with whom he may fraternize if inclination prompts, but for whom never would he cut his throat or wish to cut any one else's.

When a man does not feel that way he has no feeling at all. It is the skirt that makes him. Breeches never can. The history of clothing is the history of love.

EDGAR SALTUS.

animal is a cat that lives at Dorchester, Boston. Aleda Perkins, of 1222 Adams street, its twelve-year-old mistress, calls it Tim, and the illustration shows just how Tim and Aleda look when taking their morning spin. The wheel is Tim's delight, and his young mistress says that if the weather is fine he gives her no peace until she is bowling along on her wheel, while he sits contentedly on her shoulder.

There is a quartet of cats in Massachusetts whose tastes are somewhat similar to those of the Dorchester favorite. These cats belong to Edwin and Ernest Warren, of No. 32 Nashua street, Montvale, Mass. They ride in a cage. Bun, Bob, Dick and Peter are their names.

The Warren boys are very proud of their pets. "When we get home from school," they say, "we give the cats their ride on the wheel, sometimes two at a time on our shoulders and sometimes in the cage. This cage in which we take the cats is made of poultry netting, and hooks to the bicycle where the lantern ordinarily is fastened. In addition to this there are some pieces of iron that clasp the handle firmly and thus prevent the cage breaking away, even if they should experience a slight shock. The cats are very heavy when taken in the aggregate, as they weigh fully forty-five pounds."

The cats seem to take the keenest delight in touring on a wheel. They lie perfectly quiet as the wheel rolls along and seem to habit that they are performing a difficult feat.

The black cat of Danville, Ky., as it is called, is one of the curiosities of the town. This cat is a genuine bicycle fiend. Its owner, W. G. Proctor, an insurance man of Danville, says it is more intelligent than many human beings. No pace is too swift for the cat. The more his master screeches the better he likes it. He makes friends with other wheelmen, and almost any evening when his master is mounted, he may be seen perched on the shoulder of one of the fast local wheelmen. And he will not ride with more than one person on the same evening. He refuses to be shaken off by anything less than a header.

Mr. Carroll Fleming, of No. 311 West Twenty-third street, New York, owns a bicycle pug. It is a very remarkable animal. He is having built for it an upholstered wire basket suspended from the handlebars. It will become a familiar sight on the Boulevard in New York. The pug will doubtless often coax his owner for a spin by licking his hand and barking. He has a penchant for exercising his vocal chords, and while on the wheel Mr. Fleming will find no occasion to use his bell to announce his approach.

Mr. Charles Hemstreet, of No. 12 Dey street, New York, tried to break in a monkey to ride on his shoulder. Mr. Hemstreet told of the monkey's ability to cling on to his shoulder while he was searching. The simian kept up an incessant chatter as if he thought the pace too hot. He leaped from the handlebars to the rider's shoulder and back again like a flash. He showed his teeth and grinned when Mr. Hemstreet slowed up. He caught cold last week and died. Mr. Hemstreet was very proud of the monkey's accomplishments, and took great pleasure in exhibiting his bicycle tricks.

Inasmuch as fashion has taken so kindly to the wheel, and the belles in city and country have become devoted cyclists, it is only reasonable to expect that the lap-dog is going to be treated to a new experience, and the eight of little baskets attached to the front of a bicycle will, before long, probably be quite common.

## CAUGHT A LEPIDOSIREN.

A Rare Creature That Is Both Fish and Reptile, and Eats Meat.

A lepidosiren has been caught at the mouth of the Amazon River. Dr. Emil Goeldi, director of the Museum at Para, reports with pride and glory the capture of this rare and interesting creature.

One of the great ambitions of Dr. Goeldi's life since he took charge of the Museum had been to become the possessor of a lepidosiren. For several years his ambition remained ungratified, but now he is happy.

The lepidosiren is half fish and half reptile, but this peculiarity is not his only claim to distinction. He has many strange habits. Hitherto naturalists have been divided in opinion as to its classification, some calling it a fish, others a reptile, and others a combination of the two.

It has legs and lungs, and can live out of water, but its head is distinctly that of a fish. In the construction of its tail it shows some resemblance to a newt. The lepidosiren is sometimes inelegantly called the mudfish.

It lives in shallow waters, which are completely dried up by the sun during a long period of the year. The muddy beds are baked into a hard and sticky flooring, and these animals would soon become extinct if they did not possess unusual means of defence against this annual affliction.

When the hot season has set in and the water has greatly lessened, the lepidosiren wriggles its way deeply into the mud. Its eyes are so constructed that the wet soil cannot injure them and the external nostrils are two shallow blind sacs.

After it has reached a comfortable depth it curls itself around with its tail wrapped partly over its head, and in that position awaits the arrival of the rainy season. It has a very flexible spine, enabling it to curl itself up thoroughly.

While it is curled up it secretes a large amount of a shiny substance, which makes the walls of its cell very smooth and also in binding the mud together. It lies in a torpid condition and is evidently able to live without air.

When the rains fall, the moisture penetrates rapidly through the fissures of the earth, cracked in all directions by the constant heat, reaches the cell of the lepidosiren, dissolves its wall and restores the inhabitant to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in the water.

The cell of the lepidosiren is technically called a cocoon. Until thoroughly soaked in water its wall is very hard. The mucous substance lining it forms a sort of skin.

The lepidosiren attains a considerable size, and has very powerful jaws and teeth. The one in the possession of Dr. Goeldi measures over two feet in length.